Outline for Learning Network Lesson

Learning objective: Students understand how a learning network is similar and different from a social network in order to generate an agreement for how the class will work together in the learning network.

1. Explain to students that they will be working as part of learning network as part of this unit.
2. Ask students to define "network."
3. Discuss different types of networks.
4. Social networks like MySpace will certainly be identified. Once they are, ask students in pairs to brainstorm characteristics of social networks. Help them think about their purpose, what makes them work, what makes them useful and attractive to their members, etc.
5. Record characteristics for all to see along one side of the whiteboard under the words **social networks**.
6. Once you've collected lots of ideas regarding social networks, ask students to consider how a **learning** network might be similar and different from a social network. Help students see that some aspects of a social network might actually hinder a learning network, yet other aspects may be essential. On the right side of the board, write **learning networks**. Use arrows to indicate which characteristics would be useful to the learning network.
7. Even though there aren't necessarily written rules for social networks, ask students to brainstorm the "unwritten rules."
8. Out of this discussion and the previous characteristics discussion, have students generate a list of guidelines they will abide by on the learning network. Be sure to look at the characteristics identified as hindering and discuss how the group will handle such situations if they occur. Stress the nature of how the learning network is collectively owned by all members and that as such all members have the responsibility to ensure its success.
9. Pass out the "Student and Teacher Information Code of Ethics" and ask student to read it, underlining the ideas they may have already captured in their learning network guidelines.
10. Work with students to amend the code of ethic so that it can have the title "Code of Ethics for Working Collaboratively in a Learning Network." Since a learning network will obviously require the use of information, be sure students understand the key concepts in the document. Provide a scenario that could happen in the upcoming unit. Ask students to decide whether or not the scenario is ethical or not based on the document they just created--have them cite the specific details in the document that support their conclusion.
11. Now ask students in small groups to generate hypothetical scenarios to try to stump the rest of the class. As groups share their scenarios, ask the class to determine whether or not the scenario is ethical or not. Does the group who created the scenario agree or not? Why? When scenarios are determined to be unethical, ask the class to discuss how they will handle the situation if it occurs. Again, stress the responsibility for the success of their learning network rests with everyone in the class; the teacher isn't the police. :)